

**HON. MARCY KAPTUR  
OF OHIO  
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2006**

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Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, Americans are upset about what they view is a compromised, bought-out Congress. They hear of favors passing hands, deals being made, arms being twisted, while votes are held open to the wee hours of the night. They are sick of it, and they should be.

Minor procedural forms are being proposed within this Congress and are being touted as answers. But truly these proposals are window dressing, and they totally ignore the massive iceberg of campaign money that infects every single officeholder at the Federal level. The old expression goes, ``If you really want to know what is going on, follow the money." Thank goodness for Political Moneyline and other Web sites that help reveal what is really going on in Washington.

The reforms being proposed in this Congress do not get at the real problem. Each party is afraid of disarmament and certainly unilateral disarmament to get the money out. Ross Perot had it right a few years ago when he said, Those people in Congress, they are really good people caught in a very bad system.

Congress has nibbled around the edges of reform, and there are some congressional rule changes that may do the same. But to help move toward real reform, I am introducing a package of four bills dealing with the need for real limits on campaign spending as well as slamming shut the revolving door on lobbyists that allows too much foreign-generated influence and money inside this legislative branch.

My proposals are as follows: First, a sense of Congress resolution that recognizes that the Supreme Court erred and was not complete when, in the case of *Buckley v. Valeo*, they stated that free speech equaled money, that no matter how much you spent was okay because money was equated with free speech. Well, if that is true, the converse is true. If you do not have the money, you lack free speech. And more and more Americans are being shut out of the highest levels of lawmaking in this country because they simply do not have the money to compete.

My second bill is the constitutional amendment itself that would give Congress and the States the power to limit the contributions and expenditures made by, in support of, candidates for Federal, State, or local office. That is a tough proposal, but it is one that I think our children and grandchildren will thank us for.Â Â

The third measure is the Ethics in Foreign Lobbying Act of 2006, which would prohibit contribution expenditures by foreign-owned corporations and would establish within the Federal Elections Commission a clearinghouse of public information regarding political activities of foreign principals and agents of foreign principals.

It was interesting that some major Russian interests were involved with Mr. Abramoff. As this scandal unravels, we are going to find some very interesting characters sitting at the bottom of that heap.

Finally, the fourth bill is the Foreign Agents Compulsory Ethics and Trade Act of 2006, which would impose a lifetime ban on high-level government officials from representing, aiding, or advising foreign governments and foreign political parties. It imposes a 5-year prohibition on representing, aiding or advising foreign interests, including commercial interests, before the Government of the United States. It is not enough just to shut the gym to former Members who are lobbyists. You have to get at the heart of the problem.

Campaign finance authority Herbert Alexander estimated that \$540 million was spent during the 1976 period on all elections in the United States. By 2000, that figure had risen to over \$4 billion. To run for this job in the House in 1976 cost on average \$87,000. Today, the average Member has to spend nearly \$1 million, and some \$2 million, 10 times what was spent just 30 years ago, and the population hasn't gone up by 10 times.

A winning Senate race back in 1976, you could spend about half a million dollars, which is a lot of money where I come from. Today, the average amount spent is over \$5 million; and in places like New York, that is chicken feed.

Mr. Speaker, we have become a plutocracy. America, wake up. Please support real reform for our children and grandchildren.